



Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection

FACT SHEET

Paint disposal



Keep green in mind when preparing to paint your home -- green as in protecting your family's health and the environment.

Seek professional help when removing lead-based paint. Homes built before 1978 often have paint that contains high levels of lead, a hazardous material that is especially harmful to children. For more information, go to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services' lead abatement site <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/abate.htm>, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) site <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadinfo.htm#remodeling> or contact your local health department.

Buy only enough for the job. An EPA study issued in April 2007 estimates that about 10 percent of the U.S. house paint purchased each year - about 65 to 69 million gallons - is ultimately discarded. To help you buy just enough, Earth 911 -- <http://www.earth911.org> -- has tips on its [Paint Wise](#) page and there are several paint calculators online.

Use up leftover paint or share with others. Use leftover paint for base coats and small projects like touch-up jobs. Combine smaller quantities of the same type of paint (latex + latex, oil-based + oil-based) to use where color doesn't matter. Avoid storing paint in extreme heat or cold.

Larger amounts of usable paint could be donated to a charitable agency. For example:

- Housing Assistance and Development Services Inc. (HANDS), 1335 Adams St., Bowling Green, 270-796-4176, <http://www.handsinc.net>.
- Habitat for Humanity's ReStore, 2777 S. Floyd St., Louisville, Ky., directly across from Gate 1 of Papa John's Cardinal Stadium, 502-637-6265. <http://www.hfhloouisville.org/>
- Habitat's Renovation Station in 1260 Industry Road, Lexington, Ky. 859-254-6724. <http://www.lexhabitat.com/renovationstation/>

Another way to share -- have a neighborhood "paint swap." For "how to" information, go to http://www.paint.org/con_info/exchange_guide.cfm

Dispose of the rest responsibly. For specific information about disposal in your area, contact the solid waste coordinator in your county. A list is online at <http://www.waste.ky.gov/branches/rla/County+Solid+Waste+Coordinators.htm> Some general disposal guidelines:

- Don't pour paint down the drain (it can harden and stop up your plumbing or kill the bacteria in your septic tank) or on the ground.
- Add a thickener (Waste Paint Hardener TM crystals, cat box litter, sand, dry dirt, etc.) to small amounts of latex or water-based paint and let the paint dry outside out of reach of pets and children. After the paint is solid and is not pourable, set the open can out for garbage pickup.
- Oil-based paint should not be allowed to evaporate. The fumes are toxic and flammable. Contact your local solid waste coordinator to find out the preferred manner of handling oil-based paint.

Art courtesy of the California Integrated Waste Management Board

Division of Waste Management

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